

Statistical Release

28 March 2008

PLANNING APPLICATIONS – Quarter 4 2007 October to December 2007

Due to seasonal variation, quarterly figures are compared with the corresponding quarter in the previous year in this statistical release.

DISTRICT PLANNING AUTHORITIES

Planning applications

In the fourth quarter of 2007, district planning authorities in England received 150 thousand applications for planning permission (**Table 1**); an increase of 1 per cent compared with the corresponding quarter in 2006. Four regions (Yorkshire and the Humber, East of England, London, South East) and National Park authorities saw an increase in the number of applications received when compared with the same quarter a year ago; the largest increase was in London (11 per cent).

Planning decisions

District planning authorities determined 149 thousand planning applications in the fourth quarter of 2007; 6 per cent higher than the same quarter last year. The largest increase in the number of planning applications determined when compared with the same quarter last year was in London (11 per cent). Other large increases were in the East of England (10 per cent), East Midlands (7 per cent) and the South East (6 per cent). However, the North East and National Parks saw a decrease in the number of planning applications determined (-2 per cent) and (-4 per cent) respectively (**Table 2**).

Householder decisions increased by 2 per cent from 70,400 to 72,100 and accounted for 49 per cent of all decisions. Decisions on dwelling applications, for both major and minor

developments increased from 18,300 to 20,700 and accounted for 14 per cent of the total (Table 3).

Applications granted

82 per cent of all decisions in the fourth quarter of 2007 were granted; this remains unchanged when compared with the same period in 2006 (Table 1). Approval rates across the regions ranged from 76 per cent in London to 89 per cent in the North East (Table 2).

Speed of decision

In April 2002, Best Value targets for district planning authorities were introduced concerning the speed with which they determine planning applications. The targets were drawn up to encourage authorities to give higher priority to dealing with more complex applications which may have a bigger local impact than simpler applications. Following Spending Review 2004, these targets were incorporated in the Department's Public Service Agreement 6 (SR04) and are as follows:

- 100% of authorities to process a minimum of 60% of major applications within 13 weeks by 31 March 2007;
- 100% of authorities to process a minimum of 65% of minor applications within eight weeks by 31 March 2007; and
- 100% of authorities to process a minimum of 80% of other applications within eight weeks by 31 March 2007.

New targets are being introduced on 1 April 2008 but until then we will continue to measure the performance of district planning authorities against the targets set in 2002.

In October to December 2007 district authorities, on average, determined 70 per cent of major applications within 13 weeks, 77 per cent of minor applications within 8 weeks, and 87 per cent of other applications within 8 weeks. **This represents a 1 percentage point improvement in determining minor applications, no improvement in determining major applications and a 1 percentage point decrease in determining other applications when compared with the corresponding quarter a year ago (Table 7).**

Also, in October to December 2007, 257 authorities (70 per cent of all authorities) made at least 60 per cent of their decisions on major applications within the 13 week period; 317

authorities (86 per cent) made at least 65 per cent of their decisions on minor applications within the statutory 8 week period; and 316 authorities (86 per cent) made at least 80 per cent of their decisions on other applications within the statutory 8 week period. **The number of authorities meeting the performance target in October to December 2007 compared with performance in the same quarter a year ago represents a decrease of 3 percentage points on major applications, 1 percentage point on minor applications and 2 percentage points on other applications.**

In the year-ending December 2007, the proportion of authorities meeting the target on majors is 83 per cent (306 authorities); this is a 2 percentage point increase compared with the year-ending December 2006 figure. For minors, the actual performance is 93 per cent (342 authorities) an improvement of 4 percentage points whilst for others the performance is 90 per cent (331 authorities) unchanged from the year-ending December 2006 figure.

Table 8 shows the number of major and minor decisions on residential planning applications and the speed of decision in the year and quarter ending December 2007 for each district planning authority. In October to December 2007, district authorities granted 66 per cent of major residential decisions and determined 67 per cent of them within 13 weeks. Also 63 per cent of minor residential application decisions were granted and 72 per cent determined within 8 weeks.

Enforcement action by district planning authorities

Table 4 shows statistics of formal enforcement action taken by responding authorities in each year since 1997/98. In October to December 2007, district planning authorities issued 1,393 Enforcement Notices and served 1,291 Planning Contravention Notices, 234 Breach of Condition Notices, 32 Stop Notices and 91 Temporary Stop Notices. The High/County Court granted 16 Enforcement Injunctions.

Regulation 3 and 4 consents

Table 5 shows the number of Regulation 3 and 4 Consents granted since 1997/98. Under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, SI 1992/1492, a local planning authority makes an application to itself for permission to develop land within its area, and determines that application. In the fourth quarter of 2007, 868

Regulation 3 consents and 69 Regulation 4 consents were granted. Regulation 4 is concerned with planning permission for development of land in which the local planning authority has an interest but which it does not itself propose to carry out.

Applications for determination

In October to December 2007, district planning authorities received 1,320 applications for determination on whether local authority approval is required for certain works (**Table 6**). Local authorities decided to intervene in 145 cases (11 per cent).

Departure applications

District planning authorities also provided information on the number of applications decided which were advertised as departures from the development plan in force, and the number of departure applications which were granted.

Of the planning decisions made by local planning authorities, 550 (less than 0.5 per cent) were advertised as departures from the development plan. Dwellings accounted for 44 per cent of departure decisions. An average of 56 per cent of departure applications were granted, compared with 82 per cent of planning applications overall.

Applications decided under delegated powers

The final column in **Table 7** shows the percentage of applications decided by planning officers under a scheme of delegation and without referral to committee or councillors on such decisions. 363 authorities (out of 367) provided information on delegated decisions in this quarter. On average, authorities delegated 91 per cent of decisions to planning officers.

COUNTY MATTERS

'County matters' planning applications are predominantly concerned with minerals extraction and waste disposal developments. They are decided by county-level planning authorities - that is, county councils, metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, London boroughs, national park authorities and urban development corporations. However, because of the nature of county matters applications, the large majority are handled by the county councils.

County planning authorities receive around 2,000 'county matters' applications each year. This compares with 650,000 planning applications received by district planning authorities. Quarterly figures for 'county matters' decisions are likely to be much more variable than those for districts because of the smaller numbers of such decisions.

Planning applications and decisions

In the fourth quarter of 2007, county planning authorities received 415 planning applications, a decrease of 6 per cent compared with the same quarter last year. County councils accounted for 87 per cent of total applications, unitary authorities for 5 per cent and metropolitan districts for 6 per cent (**Table 9**). The highest numbers of applications were received in Lancashire (30 applications) and Nottinghamshire (19 applications). Others were Cambridgeshire, Dorset, Lincolnshire and Warwickshire (all 16 applications) and Kent, Norfolk and Staffordshire (all 14 applications) (**Table 12**).

County planning authorities determined 371 planning applications in the quarter ending December 2007; a decrease of 6 per cent compared with the same quarter last year. Of these, 92 per cent were granted (**Table 9**). Leicestershire determined the highest number of planning applications (26 applications) whilst Staffordshire determined 21 applications (**Table 12**). Waste developments accounted for 71 per cent of the total decisions and minerals developments 25 per cent (**Table 10**).

Table 12 shows the number of permissions granted by authorities under Regulations 3 and 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992. The highest numbers of Regulation 3 consents were granted by Kent (73) and Leicestershire (66).

In order to better reflect the workload of authorities, information on the total number of decisions on applications for consent, agreement or approval of details or schemes required by conditions, as defined by Article 21 of the General Development Procedure Order 1995 have been collected from April 2000 and is also published in this table.

In October to December 2007, the highest number of decisions under Article 21 was reported by Leicestershire (148). The number of determinations under the review of mineral planning permissions (ROMPs) was also collated; however only 9 were determined.

Speed of decision

In the fourth quarter of 2007, 21 per cent of all decisions on 'county matters' applications were made within 8 weeks; a 2 percentage point increase when compared with the corresponding quarter of 2006. County planning authorities also determined 65 per cent of applications within 13 weeks; 5 percentage points higher than in the corresponding quarter of 2006 (**Table 11**).

Enforcement action

In October to December 2007, county planning authorities issued 36 Enforcement Notices and served 1 Stop Notice, 7 Temporary Stop Notices, 27 Planning Contravention Notices and 11 Breach of Condition Notices were also served (**Table 13**).

NOTES TO EDITORS

District Planning Authorities

1. The term 'district planning authorities' describes the group of authorities with a responsibility for deciding planning applications at 'district level'. These planning authorities include: metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, national park authorities and urban development corporations.
2. Statistics of planning applications received and decided by district planning authorities have been collated, on a quarterly basis, since April 1979 on the PS1 and PS2 General Development Control statistical returns.
3. Since then, data collection has been extended to cover other types of application requiring permission from local authorities, including listed building consents, conservation area consents and consent to display advertisements. This reflects the wider range of planning casework handled by district planning authorities. From April 1997, data have also been collected on the receipt of Environmental Statements with planning applications, the use of delegated powers, and on applications which the authority decided to advertise as departures from the Development Plan.
4. This quarterly bulletin is a web-only publication.

'County matters'

5. 'County matters' planning applications are predominantly concerned with minerals extraction and waste disposal developments, as set out in Schedule 1 of the Town

and Country Planning Act 1990 and in the Town and Country Planning (Prescription of County Matters) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1033).

6. Since April 1997 data have been collected on receipt of Environmental Statements with 'county matters' planning applications. From April 2000, information has also been collected on the total number of (i) decisions on applications for consent, agreement or approval of details or schemes required by conditions, as defined by Article 21 of the GDPO 1995, and (ii) determinations of new conditions under the review, or periodic review, of mineral planning permissions (ROMPs).

Responding Authorities for October to December 2007

7. Of the 367 district planning authorities, 365 (99 per cent) provided figures in time for this publication.
8. Of the 161 county planning authorities, 157 (98 per cent) provided figures in time for this publication.

Data presentation

9. All figures included in the commentary have been calculated using unrounded data. As a result, there may be some apparent discrepancy with figures shown in the tables.
10. The statistics shown in Tables 1 to 3 include estimates for non-responding authorities. These and the other tables are based on information provided to the Department for Communities and Local Government by 29 February 2008.
11. Any queries regarding figures in this release should be addressed to: Development Control Statistics Branch, Housing Markets & Planning Analysis Division, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2/A4, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU. Tel. 020-7944 5502, Fax 020-7944 3309.
12. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

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